IMAGES IN MY MIND

45 poems by
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2011-2013

Guelph, Ontario
December 2013

Preface

This is my third collection of poems. The first collection was published in 2006 as ***In My Mind***, while 54 new poems were printed with my autobiography ***Bridges over Barriers in my Life with Autism*** in 2011. Here are 45 more poems to match my present age. They are grouped by topic: my present priorities of family and friends; my health; my care for the environment; overcoming my barriers; my joy in words and images; and my hopes and dreams. These recent poems reflect my strong desire to choose and do all I can for myself.

I am the writer of my words not with a pen but with my fingertips. It is important people know it is me typing these rare and unique words. They are my thoughts, feelings and ideas on how I see the world. It is relief to share these. The words get stuck in my head and I need to compose them into a story of sorts. With my encouraging supporters I am able to get the thoughts to trickle from my brain to my fingertips. I am grateful people take the time to listen to my words. I think you will find them interesting and thought-provoking. It is important to listen. You may be surprised at what you may hear and actually enjoy. Life is always changing and my words change with my experiences. We grow this way. I would love to share this with all my friends who believe in me. I am so blessed with so many. I think I am the wealthiest of men. I think the wealth keeps growing. I am rich in friendships. I am happy.

Contents

Family and friends	5
My health	17
Caring about my environment	26
Overcoming my barriers	35
Metaphors in words and paint	49
My hopes and dreams	63

Acknowledgements

I thank everyone who has encouraged me to express myself, from Martha and Honeyman 20 years ago, to Beth and Judi, my communication facilitators when I composed these poems. Teresa first introduced me to poetry. Sunny set my first poems to music and developed my sense of rhythm. Heidi has been my art mentor and partner in expressing some of my poems in paint. Lea has introduced me to Clean Language as a way to reach my unconscious mind.

Friends help by listening and supporting me to realize my dreams of getting over and around my barriers. Thanks to all my friends, old and new, who encourage me to be wholly me!

Andrew John Bloomfield
Guelph, Ontario, Canada
30 November 2013

Family and friends

My life with Amy 6
Different people in my life 7
What colour is friendship? 9
Celebrating a friend's birthday 10
Believing in me 11
Surrounded by friendship 12
My family--foundation for my life 14
Conversation with new friends 16

My life with Amy

12 Oct 2011

Amy was a dog with a loving heart.
Her beautiful eyes told us her feelings
and her gentle nudges
gave us support
when it was needed.

I never realized how much
she added to my life
until her absence left
a large and lonely hole in it.

I know now what wholeness is
but I have lost it for the time being.
I know now what balance is,
but I am sadly off my feet,
no longer steady.
But this will pass and I will heal
and my memories of Amy
will have to be enough.

Different people in my life

19 Nov 2011

It takes different things
to make the world work.
I need different people in my life
to make me work like I need to.

I have people who are strong and bold:
they are like pillars
in the bridge of my life.

I have people who are gentle
and kind with a soft heart to
give me encouragement to try:
they are the bricks
in the bridge of my life.

I have people in my life
who are there when I need them—
dependable, respectable, kind people
who respond when I need their help.

People have opinions of
who I am and who I should be.
But the people in my life who matter
are people who give me
the chance to be me.

I need to be encouraged
and given the motivation
to use my determination
but I also need to be given
time and patience to make
a change or mistake.

The people in my life help me
overcome the things in life
that could leave me in the water.
I don't like to just swim.
I like to walk over the bridge.

I need each of these
unique and wonderful people.
The bricks and the pillars
build the strength of my bridge
to pass over when I need it.

I need different people in my life.
I am me because each person
allows me to be me.
The different people in my life
make me wholly me.

What colour is friendship?

21 Dec 2011

My friends come in different colours.
I see their colours like rings around them.
Halos of violet and indigo,
forest green, sea foam, and red.
Even my dogs have their auras of orange and gold.

My friends come in different shapes and sizes:
tall and short and round and straight.
Metaphorically their personality
might be one shape
and their outside appearance another.
But they are all the same in one important way:
they have caring in their hearts.

My friends are like a rainbow in my life
that whirls around me like a spiral stairway.
It feels like a circle of colour and connection to me.
You may not see it but it is all very real to me.

Celebrating a friend's birthday

4 Jan 2012

My friend H is always in my corner:
she has been a friend and supporter
of the longest lasting kind.

Enduring friendship is a gift
that cannot be wrapped in tissue paper
and laid out to be opened.
Enduring friendship is invisible but tangible
and this is ours, H and me.
She is my friend:
I wonder if she knows I am hers.

Enduring friendship goes two ways
like a bridge
and we all know about bridges.
May our friendship always be
a two-way street
with the lanes across the bridge
remaining open.

H may be getting older
but she just gets better
in the gifts she shares with me
and I know she shares with others.

Believing in me

4 Apr 2012

It cannot be understated
how much I need you to believe in me.
My wiring can detect it
if you have doubts
and if you have reservations.
I know what it means to get bad vibes
and I get bad vibes
if you doubt my abilities,
if you doubt I am the author
of my words.

I need you to believe in me,
or I might lose faith in myself.
I need you to send me
messages of encouragement
so I can keep up my mental state.
I will try not to disappoint you,
I will try to show you who I am.
But believe in me
and I have a better chance to do so.

Surrounded by friendship

2 Nov 2012

I am at the centre of it all.
I am a friend; I have many friends.
I know some better than others
but they all surround me.

I am grateful for the different people in my life.
Some share their talents and gifts with me
and I am honoured to receive these.
I am humbled by the great ideas others share.
I always look for ways to share and give back.
My friends give me encouragement to be me.

I am not always the best of company
but I love to be host with my closest friends.
My hope is to give them what they have given me.
I know I don't need to or they don't expect it back
but they share themselves and their time
just to be with me and support me to be me.

Some people come into my life for a reason
but I keep them in my heart forever even
if our reasons to be together are complete.
Some make an imprint on my life like a carving.

The ideas and experiences I share
with each of my friends are different.
They are each as unique as I am.
I am in awe as to why they find me so interesting.
Each of them is a very interesting person as well.
Maybe our differences are also the parts
in our lives that make us friends.

Some people come and go
and some stay for a long time.
I know they each have had time to reflect
on their reason for being in my life.

People who are in my life
because they want to be,
not just need to be,
they are true real people
who value me and my life.
These are my friends.
My life is surrounded by these friendships.

My family--foundation for my life

3 Aug 2013

I want to tell the people I love
that they are an important part of who I am.
My ancestors have been the foundation
for this sturdy house of love.
The makings of a good foundation
don't only need mortar
but a good frame and model.
The Bloomfields give me a framework of
determination, hard work, strength,
caring and positive attitude.
Along with the mind
of great men and women in our family
comes our sense of humour.
The Bloomfields' love of the green landscape
goes way back.
I love their honour for our land
and keeping it alive and healthy,
that comes from my background

My family is a mix of young and old,
not only related by blood
but by strings of friendship.
Some of my greatest mentors have been my family.
I have learned the lesson
of perseverance and patience
that has given me acceptance
for myself and others.

My family is the foundation for my life.
Without these people I have an empty home.
My family continues to grow,
with new people being introduced
and I welcome them to Home Bloomfield.
I welcome them to my family.
Being part of this home
means a commitment
to me and the family.
So don't take it on
unless you're ready
to be part of the family.
I have many family:
all my friends could be listed;
the family is endless.

Conversation with new friends

26 Oct 2013

Sharing new ideas and feelings,
saying what I want
and having my voice heard.

Meeting new people is good
but I need to give them and myself
time to say what I really want.
I need you to be there
and waiting for my words.
We need time together to learn
about one another.

I trust you to see me for who I am.
Trust is big
and makes up a large circle
with many people.
The new people in my life
become trusted companions over time.
Trust does not happen all at once:
it takes time and love.

New people bring new ideas
and other people into my life
and the circle gets bigger.
I am thankful for all my friends.

My health

Healthy in spirit 18
My doctor 19
After the storm 20
Green mode 21
A restful night 23
A hopeful day 24
My ups and downs 25

Healthy in spirit

16 May 2012

My spirit soars but
it is brought down to earth
by a body that is broken
in ways it is hard to see.
If you know about invisible afflictions
that is what I am all about.

I have healthy thoughts
and try to feed my brain
the foods it needs
to be the kind of brain that is not exploding
when I least expect it.
But I cannot control what happens
in the electrical circuitry of my brain.

My intentions
are to serve my brain
what it needs to be healthy,
but it does not seem to work
as well as I might wish,
for my brain has a mind of its own.

It is a stubborn child
that will not follow orders
and refuses to be tamed.
I will be the parent and try
to do what is best
so we will soothe
the savage beast in the end.

My doctor

13 Jun 2012

How many people can claim
to have the best doctor in town?
I do though
and the reasons why are indisputable.
He knows I cannot tolerate
the crowded busy noisy office
with crying babies and staring teenagers.
So he comes to me instead
with respect and good listening.
and does not doubt my words
or who they come from.

My doctor answers me
and looks for solutions with me.
He is a team player and
I feel lucky to have him.
Needles make me want to run and scream
so he does not subject me to them unnecessarily,
and drugs are my sworn enemy
which he also understands.

My doctor believes me and our ideas
in a way that most doctors
could stand to learn from.
He too is a runner and knows
why running is instead of a drug for me.
He is humble and unsuperior,
making me have no fear in approaching him.
We are friends and partners
in advancing the agenda
of my good health.

After the storm

11 Jul 2012

My body is tossed and turned
like a garden during a tornado
when I am struck by the internal storms
that pass through me from time to time.
The bits and pieces strewn everywhere
and vines entangled with no rhyme or reason.
I have to unfold my thoughts and order them
like straightening out the rows of peppers
and lettuce and cucumbers.

Before the storm I know it is coming
like a weather vane pointing
in the direction the wind is blowing
and then I have to duck under the covers
until it passes me by.
My body crawls out
wrecked and mangled and needing
teams of gardeners to clean up the mess.

I feel a sense of relief that it is over
and I can clean things off
and get back to the business of life.
I need a rake and a shovel
and a wheelbarrow to haul it away
and I need your help
to stake my body up again,
braced for the next storm.

Green mode

3 Oct 2012

Green is a grand way to be these days.
It means environmentally
conscious and responsible.
It means being aware of the earth,
and for me it means
feeling in good health and spirits.
Grey days are behind me,
the days of fog and thick-headed thinking.
Now the fog has cleared
and the grass is green in my yard.
I think of green as all that I love.
Green forests, green pastures, green gardens
and my green clothes that give me comfort.
Some might think green is a colour of ill-health
but I do not,
because it means growth and fertility
and the promise of future in the air.

Green mode means I am in the present:
I am aware and thrilled to be alive.
Feeling alert sure beats the grey fog of ill-health
and I am glad to see the world again,
with all of the distractions and sensations
that can also drive an autistic man mad.
If I am in green mode I am also in open mode
and the bombarding noise
and bustle of the world need contending with.
But at least this means I am once again
actually in the world with everyone else
and not under the covers of my bed.

I emerged when the grey cloud had lifted
and the world looked like
it had waited for me to return.
It is good to be back.
Love sustained me in the grey time
and love sustains me in the green mode.
Now I can feel it and return it too.
I am in my element
and it feels good
to be alive once more.

Bedtime blessing for a restful night

29 May 2013

I breathe in and I breathe out
and I listen
to my friend's beautiful voice
sing to me of hope.
I wish for a restful night
where angels come
and guide me
with images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.

I breathe in and I breathe out
and I recall
the kindness of all my friends.
I wish for a restful night
where angels come
and guide me
with images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.

I breathe in and I breathe out
and in my imagination
I'm running free:
I run like the wind.
I wish for a restful night
where angels come
and guide me
with images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.
I breathe in and I breathe out
and I think about

the warm embrace
of my family
and the intimacy
of my four-legged companion.
I wish for a restful night
where angels come
and guide me
with images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.

Morning blessing for a hopeful day
10 June 2013
I breathe in and I breathe out.
I am grateful for waking this morning,
and ready to start my day with hope.
I am strengthened by a good sleep
and the morning light.
I look forward to a good and interesting day—
exercise, painting, typing and work.
I wish for a hopeful day
of being my best, of being me,
guided by images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.

I breathe in and I breathe out.
I think of the people I will see today—
and people we may meet in the community,
and above all my dear loyal companion Yukon.
I wish for a hopeful day
of being my best, of being me,
guided by images of good deeds
and nice people who care for each other.

My ups and downs

15 June 2013

I have a day of hope to look forward to.
As quickly as I get my feet on the ground,
my thoughts may change.
My actions do not always match my thoughts.
It is my work of the day
to keep my mind and body
on the same path.

I want to live a life with determination,
to have goals and dreams,
to see these fulfilled
and lived out.
My body does not always
allow this to happen.
My desire is to make it happen.

It is a trip down a long and curved road
but it can be a wonderful journey.
I don't want to fail but to succeed in all I do.
The road is not easy but so much worth it.
I want to live it and not worry
about whether I do it all.

My life is mine to enjoy
and the bumps along the way
make it most difficult
but so interesting.
This is the hope I have in living.

Caring about my environment

Snow with Amy	27
Sensing autumn	29
Appreciating snow	30
April showers	32
Birds in my garden	33

Snow with Amy

7 Dec 2011

Snow is a life force for me
as it was for my dear friend Amy,
my companion and service dog.
Snow made her feel
younger than her years
and makes me feel free
from my conflicted body.
Snow is the promise in the air
of winter fun, warm drinks,
and friends coming to visit.

Snow is cool and refreshing:
it feels comforting on my skin.
I recall Amy running and rolling in it
so I imagine it felt somewhat the same to her.
The freedom from humid summer days
and being hot under the collar.
I wonder if Amy felt the same
with her constant winter coat,
even on hot summer days.

Snow freed us from being hot
and gave us energy from
the moist coolness on our faces and skin.
I loved being free from irritability.
Did Amy feel irritable in summer as well?
She handled it well if she did.

I think sound is muffled
when there is a blanket of snow
on the ground
and I like the quiet and peace it brings.
I wonder if Amy liked that too
since she was so sensitive to sound like me.

I don't really notice how snow looks,
just how it makes me feel,
and I don't suppose Amy cared much
about the pretty picture either.

Sensing autumn

AB 2 Nov 2012

This is a good crisp cool day.
I like it very much.
It makes my senses come to the surface.
I feel things better when it is cool.
On our walks I like to feel the cool air on my face:
I feel more alive,
I feel confident and free.
I feel the sounds of winter:
its sounds become vibrations
like the water in waves.
I like the feeling the wind makes in my body:
it calms me.
I like to be out in it when it is dry not rainy.
The noise it makes is like a whistle.
The trees wrap their branches around the cool air.
In a storm it feels good inside my home.
I have the warm feeling of love when I am safe.

Appreciating snow

21 Dec 2012; 9 Jan 2013

I like snow
for all the good it does
both for the ground and me.
Snow is needed
even though it is not nice when dirty.
I love to walk in it
and feel the freshness on my face.
It is life-giving.
I love the sounds it makes.
Under the tires of the car
it is a nice sound of a squeal.
Under my feet it is crunchy.
It is a good sound.
I love snow.

To some people snow is a nuisance.
but I like snow.
It is good in many ways
even though it can be ugly
when it gets grey and dirty.
Snow is good for the ground
because it gives us moisture
in the reservoirs and lakes.
Snow helps the birds to have something to drink.
For me it provides a visual blanket.
I like the crunching sound it makes
when I walk on it.

Snow in the air feels fresh on my face.
I like the quiet of the neighbourhood
after a snowfall.

I hear the flakes settling
on the branches of the trees
and on my head.
Under the car tires
there is a funny sort of screech
and it makes me laugh to myself
as the dog and I
walk safely on the sidewalk.

I like to get bundled up in my coat
and don my boots.
I won't wear a new t-shirt,
but my old boots and coat
are my winter friends.
I think I could walk forever
on a snowy day.
No heat and humidity
to disturb my inner thermometer.
The world seems calm
and peaceful and pretty
when the snow falls and
I am out in it.

In my younger days
I used to ski across the fields,
but winters were colder then
and we had more snow.
I like the thought of snowshoeing
like the native people of Canada
and our early settlers.
I could forget all the cares of our lives
when out on a good walk in the snow.

April showers

3 Apr 2013

It is a month of rebirth,
of rain showers and brisk winds;
it is a month of little buds
coming up from the hard ground
and hopefulness as things burst into colour.

We close the door on winter now
as the earth brings new life
with flowers and birth of young animals
and fresh air in our faces.

It is time of sunshine and daffodils,
it is the time for running
with my dog Yukon,
it is a time for people
to come out to the park.

April is a good month for birthdays,
it is a time for partnerships and new beginnings.
Wishing for my April friends:
a cheery new start to your year
and flowers all around you.

Birds in my garden

6 Mar 2013

Feeling tense, my brain in a spin cycle, I could hardly hold in the storm. The only way I could express my thoughts with B's support was to make a special list of birds. I thought the birds in the garden might be a rainbow of colours and named them in order of the alphabet, as a draft poem.
Heidi and I painted 21 of these birds,
seen in my back garden as if through a large window.

American tree bird sparrow. He is bracing for winter with his furry red cap.
American gold finch. Yellow like the sun.
Barn swallow for David. Shiny black head--does he glow in the dark?-- a red spot like an Indian lady.
Cardinal is red as blood and roses and I can see them in the snow.
Duck. I think of quacking and green heads.
Eagle. Strong and in charge of the skies.
Flycatcher sounds unique. It is olive green and small and perching way up high.
Goose, with lovely necks and nasty droppings.
Heron is long legged and long beaks with grey blue feathers wading in the river. Big beaks that skim the water.
Indigo bunting. Indigo is beautiful blue isn't it?
Jays are blue and sometimes other colours. Blue jays are bossy and big.
Kestrel-orange and chubby with freckly chest.
Loon--it is on our dollar. Black and white like a swimming zebra.

Mockingbird is small and lovely white yellow.
Nighthawk is brown with lines. It gets the mice and has long wings.
Osprey. I like the sound of that. It has a golden beady eye. O is also for Oriole.
Pheasant the colourful; chicken-looking; fast runner.
Quail is exotic with plume feather atop her head.
Robin with its red breast.
Shrike. It is endangered and I want it in my garden.
Silver slim and white.
Thrush sounds nice with white belly.
Vireo with red eyes glowing in the rain and dark.
Woodpecker, hairy and cute with red feather on the side of his head.
Yellow throat sounds like a disease!
Zenaida, also known as a mourning dove.

Overcoming my barriers

My sense of humour 36
A home of my very own 38
Typing to talk independently 39
The green man running 40
Green man running in autumn 41
Today's the day to make it happen 42
I am a good fast runner 43
Running friends 44
Opening the taps 45
Rhythm, a tender drumming 47

My sense of humour

19 Aug 2011

I am thinking about my humour.
I enjoy laughing:
I am a funny man,
I've been called a card.

I think I laugh more than people realize.
I think people's faces
when they don't understand me
are very funny.

When I go to the bank
people talk to Yukon
but they don't know what to say to me.
They don't understand but don't try;
This seems funny sometimes.

I think G and E are very funny;
they makes me laugh.
I enjoy a good laugh
just like everyone else
but I may not let you know.

Sometimes people don't find
the same things funny.
This is confusing.
I like to think about people
and the differences we have.
This is very funny.

People might think I am different
but not really who I am different from.
People are funny that way.
I think people see differences
instead of the person
and that is very funny.
I don't wish to change people's thinking
Just their openness to
differences in everyone.

I am not being funny now;
this is very serious
I am not laughing now.
I wish I didn't have to let others know this,
but it is necessary.

Why do others just laugh
and it is understood?
I want to be a funny man too and
maybe people will hear my laughter .
I am happy being me;
just frustrating sometimes having to explain.
I think I am done with being so serious.
I like being funny.
I am a funny man
but not peculiar.

A home of my very own

2 May 2012

Getting my own home
was a way of growing up,
a way of putting down roots,
and a way of gaining respect.
Getting my own home
was a way of feeling safe,
knowing I would never again
have to live anywhere
that was not good for me.

I want to know I am king in my castle
and no one can beat down my doors.
I want to know I am showing others
I can do this and that maybe
they can too.
I want to know
we are teaching others
about living a good life
and that having one's own home
is a key ingredient.

A key is a way to unlock the door
to new experiences
but it is also a way
to keep out annoyances.
Things that are bothersome or
that make me feel limited
may not get past the doorway.
I will always welcome those who
who come with open hearts and minds
and a hunger for friendship and good food.

Typing to talk independently

30 May 2012

Independence is eluding me.
Typing to talk has been a bridge
and my facilitators my guides.
I need more support than sometimes I want
and use more support than they think I might need.
My crossing over the bridge
to more independence
is a path of stumbling blocks.

I know I can do it
but the effort is taking away
some of the joy of using words
and makes it tedious and boring.
I know if others can do it
so should I be able to as well.
It is up to me to listen
to the words of encouragement
and do what is required
to catch that elusive goal
of typing to talk independently.

I can do it: nobody else can do it for me.
Cheer for me like a runner in a marathon.
Sustain me with water and nourishing words
and I may finish the race.
I need to know you expect the best effort from me,
I need to approach this as an athlete in training.
I need to run for the gold medal
and type my way across the finish line.

The green man running

5 Sep 2012

The green man runs to flee his skin,
crawling and overstimulated,
runs because he must to feel better.
The green man runs
with one dog by his side,
the other in his mind.

The green man is never really free
and dogs too
always on the end of a leash.
But the green man and his dog
can imagine
what freedom might be like
when they run.
How can one know
if running free is ever possible,
but the green man can dream.

Green man running in autumn

31 Oct 2012

It is breezy and the leaves are gold and brown.
The green man runs without
the heat and humidity of summer
that can dampen spirits
and weigh him down.
The green man runs for his life.
The autumn air is perfect:
it is life-giving and energizing;
it is freedom and calm.
The sun shining through the leaves is restful.
The running could go on
and on and on.
The green man runs
as the wind rustles
the leaves on the ground
and what is left hanging by a thread
on the branches of the trees.

The green man running
is running at peace
into the sunshine
and knowing winter
is around the next corner.
He runs winter spring summer and fall,
but now he runs knowing
the cold refreshing air
and snow falling in his face
are to be looked forward to.
And he runs on
as the calendar moves on with him.

Today's the day to make it happen!

19 Jan 2013

I am a proud man
who prefers to do my best at all times.
I am trying my best always.
Today's the day to make it happen--let's go for it!
I will do my best
which may not be
the expectations of others.
Is it necessary to be the way
others expect me to be?

I am a man with new thoughts and my own ideas.
If it is important to me, I will make it happen.
I need to know that, if I don't
get to the finish line, it is okay.
It is a journey, not a race.

My dreams to make my life the best it can be
need to be worked on every day.
I am a man with great determination;
but there is a limit.
I am a great schemer of good ideas;
I want things that are always out of my reach;
but I keep stretching myself to get there.

It is my responsibility and choice
to be the person I choose,
whether it is making the best
of a not-so-great situation
or seeking something new.
I need to run towards it.
and take the decision to make it mine.

I am a good fast runner

6 Feb 2013

I am a good fast runner.
I am determined and focused.
I keep up.
Being determined and focused is
exciting and responsible.
Exciting is huge and big with unlimited joy.
I can reach it.
It is where I want to be.
I can do what I need to do.
I can go towards it and reach
a very big dream that will bring me joy.
Joy is being full of hope and peace and
knowing that I have done my very best.
Joy is big, it is green and yellow.
I am smiling and running with Yukon
and we are in a field of green and yellow.

My dream is happiness.
My dreams are in my thoughts and my heart.
I grow and push myself forward to make it happen.
My very big dream is fulfilled.
I keep the dreams alive.
I feel so good and alive
like a runner in a marathon
going for the finish line.
I see my family and friends cheering.
My body is free and able,
like a plunge into the water.
I am a runner with a dream to keep going.

Running friends

26 Oct 2013

Running friends are key to my success
as a good runner.
The steps toward the goal are taken
one at a time.
It takes time to get to know one another
and share the passion for running.
Running is not only about the distance:
it is making your mind and body
work together.

One step and then the other
and you feel the hand of your guiding soul
give you confidence to keep going.
Your breathing begins to speed up
and you feel exhausted but thrilled at the same
time.
If your running friend were not there
you would lose some of the strength to keep going.
I am never alone without my running friend
who gives me hope that I can carry on.

Opening the taps

6 Nov 2013

My brain is like a water faucet:
when it is open,
words and feelings pour out of me.
and then it is closed and I shut off.
Nothing helps to open the taps
like being with you.
I feel open when you sit down
and invite me to speak my mind.

If the faucet is stuck
you grease it with your encouraging words.
and when I need to shut off you let me.
Sometimes it is slow to get flowing
like in the winter when things
start to freeze.
Then you chip away the ice
in a way that is neither mean
nor tentative.

My brain is saying yes thank you
and I will tell you what
is in my heart.
My brain is full to the brim
but I need my writing partner
to help open the faucet,
like I need partners to run
and to work in the garden.

Does this mean you are a plumber
or someone who knows
about water faucets?
You keep your brain open to me
and I think when you invite me
to talk there is a coupling of our minds
and the words come flowing.
Not always but when it is working
it is a monumental thing
and I am grateful for these moments.

Rhythm: a tender drumming

My movement differences impede me in doing what others take for granted, such as running and speaking. I dream of breaking through these barriers.
16 Nov 2013

I am able to get myself started,
to move and begin without the help of others.
My thought comes out like love
from right here where we are
in our moment of thinking
and it flows like the river water.
It trickles without needing any help.
It is like rhythm.
Encouragers who show me love begin the rhythm.
It is a heartbeat that is there and natural.

When my thought comes out like love
it is a good feeling
like it is natural and meant to happen.
My heart is full of love and I am hopeful
I can share it with others who want to accept it.
It keeps growing
so it is very very big and endless.
When it keeps growing,
it keeps being shared with others
and it becomes something new to someone else.

When I am able to get myself started,
I put my body into action.
I move my hand to the rhythm
and make my words come to life
outside of my head.
The rhythm is a kind of rhythm
where my head and heart work together

The rhythm is enjoyed like music.
It is a good feeling that happens.
The rhythm is from my heart
and goes naturally without any effort.
This heart is deep inside me with my entire body
working together to make everything happen
how it should.
I love when this happens.

The rhythm is a tender drumming.
This tender drumming feels nice,
like my entire body is together.
It is a kind of tender drumming
that goes constant
and keeps my body in constant motion.
The tender drumming comes from my heartbeat.
The heartbeat and tender drumming are the same.
It is good feelings all working together.
It is like the love in my heart
becomes more natural to share when my life is all
beating in rhythm like the gentle drumming.

An encouraging push and smile from my supporter:
I begin and my rhythm begins.
It is there and I feel it there
when I am reminded it has a purpose.
The tender drumming, river water and I
all have rhythm.
My body moves like the river
so it is as natural as my heartbeat.

Metaphors in words and paint

The meaning in life 50
My life as a poet 51
Thoughts 52
River of thoughts 53
The philosopher and the autistic man 55
Images in my mind 56
Being a student 58
Poetry and painting partnerships 59
Horse and man 60
Tree of life 62

The meaning in life

15 Feb 2012

Life is mysterious, isn't it?
We always seek answers;
we have so many questions.
I know you are a seeker of truth and beauty
and I a seeker of meaning.
We can meet in the middle
and paint pictures
with the answers we find.
I think we can have a meeting of our minds
and a meeting of our hearts.
I like to connect with you
and I hope you do too.

My life as a poet

21 Mar 2012

Our lives go in circles,
over and under bridges.
We may have a plan
but the path is never straight.
My life as a poet began
before I knew it was my journey.

I collected ideas
and snippets of this and that,
stored in my brain.
I did not know,
in the days my voice was not heard
that one day I could say it all--
say it in ways that sounded
pleasing to my ear
and to the ears of others.

Now the words come easily
although my hand is not yet stable
and I need the support of poetic partners
who know how to hold my reins
without stopping me in my poetic path.

I do not know
where this all will take me.
Will I lose the poetry
if I gain the strength to type alone?
I do know I need you now and always.
You are part of my life as a poet.

Thoughts

25 May 2012

I am a very understanding being.
I feel deeply.
I struggle to express myself.
There are many ideas floating in my head.

The ideas are strong and meaningful.
My hope is to share them with others.
I don't speak just to be heard.
I share to help others understand.

My thoughts run wild and they need time to settle.
Maybe it's best I don't use the other ways to talk.
I wait to put my ideas into thoughts
that are worth hearing.
I want to talk but not just make noise.
I am trying to share my ideas through
meaningful words that I put thought into.
Let's express words
that are thoughtful and meaningful.

Thoughts are good if expressed
with good intention.
I think thoughts are best kept under lock and key
if not done with the intention to be helpful.
Otherwise keep thinking
until your thoughts are the best.
Thoughts are thinking ideas out loud.
I want to share those ideas
to be a positive influence.

River of thoughts

8 Jun 2012

The river is a beginning and an end.
The river begins to trickle,
The trickle becomes bigger
and a stream forms.
The stream becomes a body of water
to be home to plants and fish.
The bottom is rocky and smooth
from the constant motion of the water.
The river becomes home to many things.
The plants flow like ribbons in the water.
The birds of the river become
the hunters of the fish.

The herons stand tall and look like
they are guarding the river.
The geese are a noisy and large presence.
I feel like a goose sometimes:
I am noisy with my unexpected energy.
I can be seen as a threat to those I don't know.
I am not harmful to anyone:
I just need to get to know you.

The river becomes so wide it needs a bridge
to get across this magnificent body of water.
It has many things to stop you
and have you look and listen.
It has to be strong and powerful
to do what it needs to.
The river becomes a forceful stream
that needs a bridge to pass over
to enjoy things on either side.

This is like my life:
I need the powerful and noisy things
in my day to make it all work.
I am going back and forth
on the bridge every day.
My life is changing always
but it is full of energy and new things
that form the rocks in my life.
They keep changing and smoothing
as the river in my life moves.
I am thankful for the bridges
I have in my life to cross it
when I need to.

My life is much like the river.
The river is magnificent:
the river of my home and life.

The philosopher and the autistic man

8 Aug 2012

Questions flowing back and forth
like the tidal waves flowing in and out.
We talk and share,
the philosopher friend and me.

I know he respects my mind
and challenges me to think
as we consider each other's perspectives.
I hear his questions in my mind
and I dig down to find the truth.

I know his questions are more
than merely intellectual,
he wants to understand me.
I wish to understand him as well
and how he sees the world.

I wonder if we are more
alike than different.
I look for patterns,
he looks for meaning.

We are both seekers
on a logical voyage of learning.
Do you want to come along
on our journey of discovery?
We can take passengers too.

Images in my mind

22 Aug 2012

My mind is a steady stream
of thoughts and pictures--
images that bump into each other.
I find them colliding as they flow
through my consciousness
untethered, unconnected
needing a master netmaker
to catch and separate.
I need to trap them
into pieces of sensible sentences
to express them, not only to others,
but to myself.

Sometimes I don't know what I am thinking
until I type it out for all to see.
I am conscious, but my brain
is like laundry in the dryer,
tumbling and mixed up,
the colours swirling
and items indistinguishable
one from the other,
hard to disentangle.
It happens like a backward chemistry formula
where you see the elements
distinct and standing on their own.

Can I tell you what happens
when I begin to type,
what happens to the mess of wet laundry
that starts in my head all tangled
and comes out like I planned it that way?

It is like magic I cannot explain.
I know they are my thoughts
I know I saw the images in my mind
but I did not know their form
until I put them out of my head
through my fingers and
with your support
the words come into focus
in a meaningful way.

Being a student

5 Oct 2012

My life is a long series of learning.
I have new experiences that bring me
joy as well as sorrow.
It can be a tough road to travel.
It can also be an exciting and fast moving time.
The new people in my life
add colour and fresh ideas.
The old people in my life
give me support and stabilization.
The ideas of all give me thoughts
to develop myself into a better man.
I need to fuel my brain
with new and old thoughts every day.
The brain is a superb organ but it needs to be fed.
I love to be encouraged to find out more
and to seek answers to my questions.

My brain craves to be fed
the nutrition of words and ideas
both fact and fiction.
But I prefer the real truth and facts.
It is good to be creative and dream
but I like to be realistic.
My dream is to learn more and be a student.
We cannot be close-minded and negative thinkers.
I want to learn more and be open to new things
that will make my brain grow.
I am a student of life.
My brain is explosive with new ideas
I want to share with all.

Poetry and painting partnerships

23 Jan 2013

My words are a painting
and my paintings
show my words in colour and form.
I think about things
and they spill out in words
when a supporter comes along
and offers her hand beneath my fingers.
I like to let it melt out of me
like butter in the pan.
I think a painting could be yellow
to show the bright ideas I sometimes have.

I wish I could believe
I have it in me to be an artist.
My ideas are transferred to canvas
by my painting partner:
I cannot create the scenes with my own hands.
My mind knows what I have to say
but the hands can't get it
to look as I imagine it.
So I paint the picture with my words.

I know my paintings are
a collaboration,
and so it is a social
as well as a creative experience.
I think, I type,
I make art with my partner
and we share the time
and the glory of admiration
from an adoring audience.

Horse and man

13 Jul 2013

The long and colourful body
is a strong and powerful force.
The mind of the gentle soul
is a clever one.
The kindness seen in the eyes
is a voice that whispers hope to me.
The touch of the body is warm
and I feel the beating of the heart.
It looks like it could walk right over you
but it is so kind it never would.
It is soft and a colour that soothes the eyes.

I am feeling the softness
and the rough tickle
at the same time.
When the brush touches the hair
it gives the horse a gentle rub.
It is rough but it gives a soothing feel.
I love the brown and white strong colours.
I see the thoughtful ideas of the horse
in its eyes and body.
It wants to run free
and be open to new things.
It needs the care of the man
to be healthy and keep safe.

I see the same in myself.
I need to express and
be colourful in my words.
I have strength and power behind my eyes.
Many thoughts to share
but I need the support to carry out my wishes.
Strength and power are
not only in the size
but in the heart of a horse and man.
I am a large and powerful creature.
I am treated with respect
by those who care about me.
The horse also needs this respect
and will return it.
I love the look and the feel of the wonderful horse.

Tree of life

11 Sep 2013

Life can be summed up
when we take time to look at a tree.
It starts at the roots:
we all need roots to ground us.
If the trunk is strong we stand tall,
but it can be beaten down by wind and disease.
In the life of a tree
the nourishment it receives
can make or break it.
The nourishment it receives
can help it withstand
the storms in its world.

Each tree is different as is each of us.
The tulip tree is magnificent and unique.
The red oak is fiery in the autumn.
The maple is dripping with sweetness
and reminds us to be generous
in giving goodness to each other.
The ginkgo tree is enduring:
it goes on and on
and gives me the inspiration
that my deeds will also live on.

Trees are worth protecting.
When we take care of the trees,
we protect our very lives.

My hopes and dreams

Hoping for the best 64
Building a home for "Bridges" 65
Dreaming to be free 66
Soldier of hope 67
Man of dreams 68

Hoping for the best

7 Mar 2012

I have reason to hope for the future
that life will be full of light
and love and friendship.
I have reason to hope because
it is already the truth of my life.
I am surrounded, circled and consoled
by my friends and loved ones.
I am already held in high regard
and given respect in ways
unknown to autistics in the past.
I am already listened to
for my opinion and looked to
for friendship.

I have hope for a future
that is the best because
I am on a good path
that I can return to at times
when I must lie down on the side.
I feel loved and I feel held
and I have reason to hope
my life will continue along
this way.

Building a home for "Bridges"

18 Apr 2012

In my mind the construction has begun
on our Bridges Centre.
It will be built in the woods near water
with bridges over the water
and bridges to the doors.
It will be round like a new egg
and golden like the sun.
It will have rooms to meet in and learn in,
rooms to sleep in and eat in.
There will be people gathered outside and in,
enjoying being together.
I will be there, and my friends,
old friends and new ones,
with our dearest dog companions,
there with us too.

Our Bridges Centre will have lots of light
with windows all around
and in the ceiling too,
with art made by us,
books and computers
to use and enjoy.

The Bridges Centre will be a place
of peace and quiet,
love and laughing
it will be a place of beauty
a place where we might also
show our ugly warts.
But it will be safe to be there
and be ourselves.

Dreaming to be free

11 May 2012

Freedom to me is about living
every day with meaning and purpose.
I have reason to doubt and
reason to be discouraged.
I am the author of my story.
It can be a sad one or a happy one
with things to share about my strengths.
I am choosing the story
with a positive way of reading.
My hope is to give others
hope with my stories.

I want to be an encourager.
I want to be ambitious.
I am independent and strong.
If I use my challenges to help others grow
I can use my life to be a kind of leader.
I am determined to show myself and others
I can achieve if I believe I can.
I am an achiever of big dreams
that I live out everyday
This will give me reason to live
and dream to be free.
I will then be free to be me.

Soldier of hope

15 Sep 2012

I am like a soldier.
I go into battle every day.
I am the soldier
who makes it his mission
to change things.
I envision myself running
towards the enemy—
the worry and struggles in life.
I am green
and I am fast.
I am ready
to change the things
that cause me strife.
The enemy cannot put me down.

I want to show
my determination and strength
by being full of hope.
The struggles will not get me down:
they will only make me stronger.
Hope is my ammunition
and I will go into the battle
ready to make change for the better.
Both I myself and
my army of friends
can be the shield against
anything not worth worrying about.
I am a soldier of hope.
I will make the changes I need
to be the best I can be.

Man of dreams

12 Dec 2012

I am a man of dreams.
Others might live in a world
of what is practical
but I am in this world to dream
and act to see my dreams come true.

My life in early years
was filled with limits
imposed by others who could not
imagine what I was capable of,
nor what was possible.
I had no reason to dream
until I was more in the world
and my words were heard.
Now I know the impossible
is possible after all.

I am a man of dreams
now that the impossible dream
has come true.
I can tell you what I think
and I can tell you what I mean.
If a man like me, who was behind
the cement walls of a prison
imposed by a system that did not
see people's potential,
can now talk to others
like intelligent people do,
then most any dream can come true.

I am a man of dreams and do not want
to hear the word impossible.
I want to see our dreams come true,
my dreams and the dreams of
my nearest and dearest friends.
I will keep telling you my dreams
so you will know that is my business
to dream them, and it is your business
to listen and help them come true.

Do you see we have done so much already?
I will keep dreaming,
but I need your help to get the jobs done.
Don't stop now--
We have come a long way.
This poem was my 121st, composed exactly ten years after my first poem.

Date Order of Poems in this Collection

	page
My sense of humour *19 Aug 2011*	*36*
My life with Amy *12 Oct 2011*	*6*
Different people in my life *19 Nov 2011*	*7*
Snow with Amy *7 Dec 2011*	*27*
What colour is friendship? *21 Dec 2011*	*9*
Celebrating a friend's birthday *4 Jan 2012*	*10*
The meaning in life *15 Feb 2012*	*50*
Hoping for the best *7 Mar 2012*	*64*
My life as a poet *21 Mar 2012*	*51*
Believing in me *4 Apr 2012*	*11*
Building a home for "Bridges" *18 Apr 2012*	*65*
A home of my very own *2 May 2012*	*38*
Dreaming to be free *11 May 2012*	*66*
Healthy in spirit *16 May 2012*	*18*
Thoughts *25 May 2012*	*52*
Typing to talk independently *30 May 2012*	*39*
River of thoughts *8 Jun 2013*	*53*
My doctor *13 Jun 2012*	*19*
After the storm *11 Jul 2012*	*20*
Philosopher and autistic man *8 Aug 2012*	*55*
Images in my mind *22 Aug 2012*	*56*
The green man running *5 Sep 2012*	*40*
Soldier of hope *15 Sep 2012*	*67*
Green mode *3 Oct 2012*	*21*
Being a student *5 Oct 2012*	*58*

Green man running in autumn *31 Oct 2012* *41*
Surrounded by friendship *2 Nov 2012* *12*
Sensing autumn *2 Nov 2012* *29*
Man of dreams *12 Dec 2012* *68*
Appreciating snow *21 Dec 2012/9 Jan 2013* *30*

Today's the day *19 Jan 2013* *42*
Poetry & painting partnerships *23 Jan 2013* *59*
I am a good fast runner *6 Feb 2013* *43*
Birds in my garden *6 Mar 2013* *33*
April showers *3 April 2013* *32*

A restful night *29 May 2013* *23*
A hopeful day *3 Jun 2013* 24
My ups and downs *15 Jun 2013* *25*
Horse and man *13 Jul 2013* *60*
My family--foundation for life *3 Aug 2013* *14*

Tree of life *11 Sep 2013* *62*
Conversation with new friends *26 Oct 2013* *16*
Running friends *26 Oct 2013* *44*
Opening the taps *6 Nov 2013* *45*
Rhythm: a tender drumming *16 Nov 2013* *47*

Earlier poems were published in *In My Mind: thoughts and words of Andrew Bloomfield* (2006) and as the second part of the autobiography *Bridges over barriers in my life with autism* (2011). Some paintings are posted with other information in the Andrew's Bridges blog at http://andrewsbridges.blogspot.ca/

Copies may be requested for $10 CAN
(plus postage if applicable) from
Guelph Services for the Autistic,
16 Caribou Crescent, Guelph ON N1E 1C9, Canada
Proceeds to Bridges-Over-Barriers

ISBN: 978-0-9866586-4-8